

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Why those three subjects are chosen in the curriculum?

The basic need of anyone who desires salvation and a life of worship and devotion is to acquire knowledge and acquaintance as this is the origin of everything on which depends all success. Knowledge and worship are so valuable and priceless gems that they form the subject-matter of all the compilations of the learned writers and of the speeches and sermons of the erudite religious scholars. The entire activities around us are devoted to the diffusion of the light of these most precious and essential divine gifts. To spread this light of knowledge and learning Exalted Allah revealed heavenly scriptures and sent down Prophets (Peace be upon them all). In fact, Allah created all things and all beings of the world and the heavens for the sake of knowledge and worship.

The most important work of the world consists of acquisition of knowledge and devotion to worship of Exalted Allah. This is also the aim of the creation of the two worlds. It is, therefore, very imperative that man should devote himself to these two duties sincerely and diligently in preference to all other activities which are vain and useless.

It should be noted that knowledge is superior to worship. The holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) has said in a hadith: (The superiority of the learned Muslim over the devotee is as my superiority over the least of you). So it appears that essence knowledge is better than worship, and knowledge is useful which is put into practice and used in worship. Knowledge without action thereon is useless. Knowledge is like a tree and worship is like its fruit. A tree without fruit loses its importance. Side by side with knowledge worship too is essential. It is therefore, necessary for man to acquire excellence in both these branches.

There are two reasons for according preference to knowledge:

1. **For worship to be in order and rightly offered** it is very necessary that the worshipper should have adequate knowledge about his Lord whom he is worshipping concerning his entity and attributes.

Thereafter, man should acquire knowledge about essential duties (commands) and then knowledge about the prohibitions as laid down in the sharee'ah. Then these commands must be obeyed and the prohibitions shunned totally. It is not possible to worship Allah in the right way and refrain from sins, unless a man learns the method style the prescribed hours and the manner of praying.

It is necessary in connection with the sharee'ah forms of worship to know the essential duties, like purity of the body prayer (salah), fasting and zakat including their various problems, injunctions and conditions... etc in order to perform these various forms and items of worship correctly. It is not only likely but quite certain that on account

of ignorance a man may be doing during his worship something which may violate his prayer ablution or he may fail to do these acts according to the Sunnah.

It is therefore very important to know the problems and injunctions not only about their outer form but also about their inner spirit. This is essential duty, like trust in Allah (Tawakul = توكّل), entrusting all matters to Allah (تفويض), contentment with Allah's decrees (رضاء), patience, repentance, sincerity ...etc are forms of worship of the hearts. In the same way it is necessary to acquire knowledge about the prohibitions which are the opposites of the commandments; these are anger, prolonged hopes (أمل), pride, vanity and jealousy...etc. It is necessary to refrain from these inner vices because inner worship is also an obligatory duty.

2. Beneficial knowledge creates fear of Allah, Exalted Allah said:

[إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ]

(It is the learned ones among his servants who fear Allah)

A man who has not acquired adequate knowledge of and acquaintance with Allah, cannot do full justice to his worship, nor to his fear, nor to his respected and regard. That is why knowledge combines in it all virtues and qualities. It accumulates in one person all virtues and stops him from all vices.

There is a hadith of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him):

[طَلْبُ الْعِلْمِ فَرِيضَةٌ عَلَى كُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ]

(It is an obligatory duty of every Muslim man & women to seek knowledge)

A question arises as to which kind of knowledge does the hadith refer?

The answer to this question is that it refers to the seeking of three kinds of knowledge:

1. The knowledge of Aqida/Tawheed (the oneness of Allah)
2. Knowledge of heart & its spiritual diseases (practicing sharee'ah)
3. The knowledge of sharee'ah, i.e. Islamic jurisprudence (Fiqh) and its principles.

[Minhajul abideen by Imam Al-Ghazali, translated it to English: Iqbal Hussein Ansari, page 21-30]

Note: Reading the original Arabic text is recommended.